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The Daily 202

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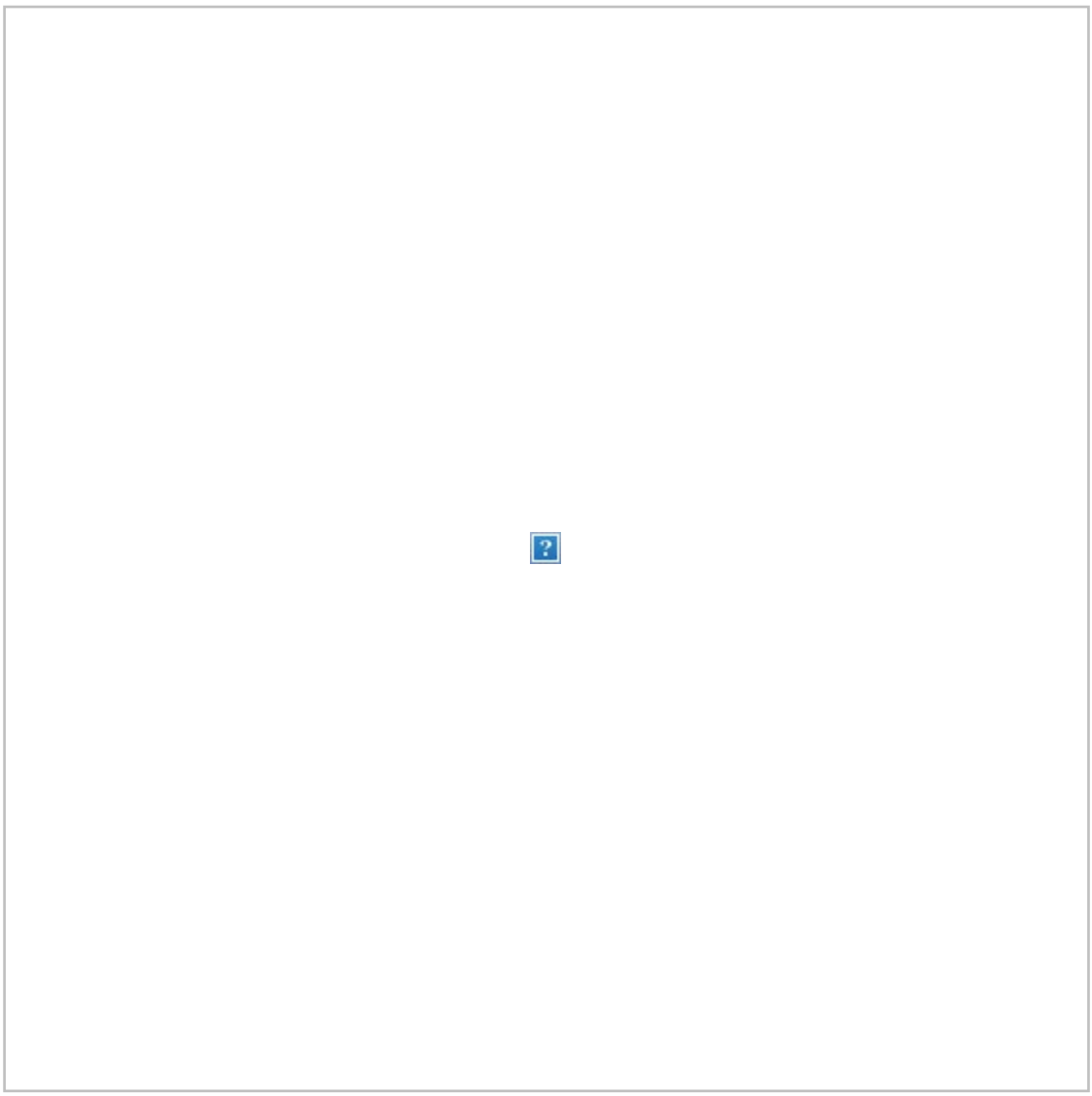
Bernie Sanders is more pragmatic than

you may think



Bernie Sanders greets supporters at a rally in Los Angeles on March 23. (Damian Dovarganes/AP)

BY JAMES HOHMANN
with Joanie Greve and Mariana Alfaro

THE BIG IDEA: Packing the Supreme Court remains as radical and unrealistic an idea in 2019 as it was when Franklin Roosevelt tried it in 1937, derailing the start of

his second term, but several of the liberals running for president have jumped on this bandwagon as they lurch leftward and seek to pass unexpected new purity tests.

Not Bernie Sanders.

The senator from Vermont might be the only Democrat running for president who doesn't need to pander to the left to be able to win the nomination. He has credibility with the base, he's near the top of the early polls, and he doesn't need to climb out on limbs to get coverage in a crowded field. **His campaign announced this morning that it raised $18.2 million during the first quarter from nearly 900,000 donors — who gave an average contribution of about $20 — and that it has $28 million cash on hand.**

All of this liberates him to be more circumspect.

Sanders was one of eight presidential candidates who appeared on Monday at a forum in Washington that was sponsored by a coalition of labor, immigration, environmental and abortion rights groups. It was the largest cattle call thus far of the 2020 cycle.

Ebony Wiggins, a Planned Parenthood activist from Nashville, expressed concern that the Supreme Court will overturn *Roe v. Wade* after Mitch McConnell blocked Merrick Garland from getting a hearing and then changed the rules of the Senate to confirm Neil Gorsuch and Brett

Kavanaugh. She wanted to know what Sanders will do "to restore legitimacy to our federal courts."

"Some people have said that maybe we need to increase the seats on the Supreme Court from nine to 11 to even maybe 13 to bring that balance back," said Wiggins, 27.

"Here is my concern about expanding the numbers," Sanders responded. "My worry is the next time the Republicans are in power, they will do the same thing. So I think that's not the ultimate solution."

He nodded to Wiggins's concerns by suggesting that perhaps justices could be cycled onto appellate courts after a certain number of years, but then he said the only real solution is to increase voter turnout to take control of the government democratically.

-- Sanders's answer was startling on a day when all his opponents appeared intent on telling all their questioners exactly what they wanted to hear. "Every candidate who was asked expressed support for abolishing the electoral college, restoring voting rights to felons and naming Election Day a national holiday," Matt Viser observed. "They all agreed to raise the federal minimum wage to $15 an hour and end privately financed prisons. And they all pledged to reenter the Paris climate accord on their first day in office."

Other senators in the race, including Kirsten Gillibrand,

Kamala Harris and Elizabeth Warren, have said they are open to adding justices to the court, in contravention of a long-cherished norm that dates to the dawn of the republic. Moderates like Sen. Michael Bennet (Colo.), who is returning to New Hampshire this weekend and is expected to formally launch his campaign soon, have said it's a terrible idea.

Why some Democrats are talking about revamping the Supreme Court

-- In recent weeks, Sanders has also bristled at the push from the left to get rid of the filibuster that

requires 60 votes to pass major legislation, and he's declined to join the parade of candidates calling for reparations.

During a televised town hall on Feb. 25, a woman asked Sanders whether he supports reparations for the descendants of slaves. He said he supports a plan by Rep. Jim Clyburn (D-S.C.) to focus more federal resources on "distressed communities with high levels of poverty" and "to do everything we can to end institutional racism in this country."

But Bernie wouldn't be baited into backing reparations. When CNN anchor Wolf Blitzer told Sanders that Warren, Harris and Julián Castro all support reparations, the Vermonter shot back: "What does that mean? What do they mean? I'm not sure that anyone's very clear. … Again, it depends on what the word means."

On Feb. 19, he said the focus from activists on ending the legislative filibuster is a distraction from more systemic problems. "I'm not crazy about getting rid of the filibuster," he said on CBS. "The real issue is that you have in Washington a system which is dominated in Washington by wealthy campaign contributors."

-- Sanders's unwillingness to follow the herd on the filibuster and court-packing reflects an abiding respect for governing institutions, guardrails and the

rule of law, as well as the wisdom that comes from serving 28 years in Congress. He won a House seat in 1990 and a promotion to the Senate in 2006. The 77-year-old has served in the majority and the minority in both chambers, so he understands the long-term value of protecting the prerogatives of the party that's out of power when the pendulum swings. Sanders pointed out on Monday that he also knows what it's like to lose and that this indelibly shaped his worldview: He joked about the early races in which he garnered just 1 or 2 percent of the vote as a third-party candidate before pointing out that he just got reelected with 67 percent.

-- To be sure, Sanders has certainly evolved on some major issues as he turned his attention from rural Vermont to the national stage. Gun control and immigration are the two most notable examples.

Supporters wait for Bernie Sanders to speak in San Francisco on March 24. (Stephen Lam/Getty Images)

-- Contrary to his public persona, however, GOP lawmakers who have worked with Sanders – including John McCain before he died – have often described him as a results-oriented realist and a savvy negotiator. Sanders has said that he sees the job of a legislator as lawmaking, not protesting. He's voted for many bills that he complained didn't go far enough on

the grounds that incremental progress is better than nothing. As chairman of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee in 2014, Sanders negotiated a bipartisan VA overhaul with House Republicans.

-- As the mayor of Burlington, Vt., for eight years, he talked a lot about international issues but governed as a pragmatist. Sanders filled potholes, rebuilt the downtown and worked with Republicans to advance his agenda. In one famous episode during the 1980s, he supported the arrest of antiwar activists who were blocking the entrance to a General Electric plant that made Gatling guns in his city because he wanted the unionized workers to be able to get to their jobs.

-- In his stump speech, Bernie now makes the case that neither he nor his ideas are radical, but that he's just been ahead of the curve and the time has finally come for Medicare-for-all, tuition-free college and a $15 national minimum wage.

-- Make no mistake, Sanders really could be the Democratic nominee in 2020. He has a path to victory at the convention in Milwaukee. His second bid has gotten off to a much stronger start than many expected.

Elizabeth Warren speaks at the We the People summit on Monday at the Warner Theatre. (Michael Reynolds/EPA-EFE/Shutterstock)

-- Sanders's willingness to call it like he saw it during the forum on Monday, even though he knew what his questioner wanted to hear, did not hurt his standing with the crowd. He received the longest applause, the loudest cheers and the most spirited chants of anyone who spoke at the Warner Theatre. More than 100 people streamed out of the ballroom as soon as he finished

speaking, even though two more presidential candidates were waiting in the wings to speak.

Warren probably got the second-best reception of the eight candidates. Organizers started playing Aretha Franklin's "Respect" to force her to wrap up her speech, but the senator from Massachusetts kept talking. "They're going to play me off here, but I'm going to say two more things," she said, undeterred but talking a little faster. It just so happened that one of those two points was about the importance of organized labor. The union activists in the room lapped it up. The moment made Warren look like a fighter, and she got a big standing ovation.

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WHILE YOU WERE SLEEPING:

The life and legacy of Nipsey Hussle

-- The Los Angeles Police Department identified a suspect in the killing of rapper Nipsey Hussle, hours after a vigil for the musician ended abruptly in a stampede that left at least a dozen people injured. Allyson Chiu and Tim Elfrink report: The suspect, a man named Eric Holder (not the former attorney general), has not been captured, but police described him as a “29-year-old Los Angeles resident who was last seen fleeing the scene of the shooting on Sunday in a 2016 white

Chevy Cruze driven by an unidentified female.” On Monday evening, hundreds gathered outside the rapper’s store, where he was killed the day before, to pay respects. After 8 p.m., the crowd suddenly began running, with some yelling that shots had been fired. A musician at the vigil later told the Los Angeles Times that a fight had broken out and that the mourners probably mistook the sound of bottles and candles shattering for gunshots. The police say they don't think shots were fired.

A sign at the Rockland County Health Department in Pomona, N.Y., explains the local state of emergency because of a measles outbreak. (Seth Wenig/AP)

GET SMART FAST:

1. **Measles cases in the U.S. have surged to the second-highest level in 20 years.** There are 387 reported cases of measles across 15 states, including New York, California and Texas. (Lena H. Sun)
2. **The Supreme Court's conservative majority ruled against a Missouri death row inmate who said he would suffer an agonizing death because of a rare medical condition,** claiming capital punishment violates his constitutional protection against cruel punishment. The court ruled 5 to 4 that he failed to show how the state's use of a lethal injection would make his suffering exceptional. (Robert Barnes)
3. **Gun rights advocates are celebrating a federal judge's ruling striking down California's ban on high-capacity gun magazines.** The decision declared unconstitutional a proposition approved by state voters in 2016. The San Diego judge, appointed by President George W. Bush, issued a sweeping decision the NRA calls "one of the strongest judicial statements in favor of the Second Amendment" to date. (Fred Barbash)
4. **Michael Brown's mother is running for the city**

council in Ferguson, Mo. Lesley McSpadden would have oversight over the police department connected to her son's death. (ABC News)

5. **A Spanish firefighter could be sentenced to 20 years in prison for rescuing thousands of migrants from drowning in the Mediterranean Sea**. Miguel Roldán has worked on multiple migrant-rescue operations and is among a crew of rescuers being accused by a judge in the Italian city of Sicily of helping human traffickers. (El País)
6. **Former hedge fund manager Martin Shkreli was thrown into solitary confinement after the Wall Street Journal reported that he was using a contraband phone to run his business behind bars.** Shkreli was reportedly assigned to a special housing unit a little over a week after the article was published. (Forbes)
7. **Manufacturing activity in the U.S. and China perked up in March as Europe lagged behind.** The growth sparked a rally in U.S. stocks as Europe appears to be having the most trouble regaining a sustained growth. (Wall Street Journal)
8. **China is selling genetically modified mice for as much as $17,000 a pair.** Demand for animals that mimic human diseases is skyrocketing as President Xi Jinping works to turn the country into a biomedical powerhouse by 2025. (Bloomberg News)
9. **A pregnant sperm whale washed up dead on an**

Italian beach with 49 pounds of plastic in its stomach. The mammal's remains contained fishing nets, garbage bags and even a bag of washing machine liquid that still had a recognizable label on it. (CNN)

10. **Catholic priests in Poland are reviving the practice of burning Harry Potter books because they believe they promote sorcery.** Images of the priests burning the books have been the cause of mockery online. (The Guardian)
11. **Burger King is rolling out a meatless Whopper this week in St. Louis.** The quarter-pound burger, called the Impossible Whopper, could stir other fast-food burger chains to come up with their own versions of the vegetarian-friendly option. (Tim Carman)

A demonstrator participates in a candlelight vigil for Jamal Khashoggi outside the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul. (Yasin Akgul/AFP/Getty Images)

STILL WAITING FOR JUSTICE:

-- If you read one thing today: "It's been six months since Jamal Khashoggi's murder, and Trump has done nothing," an op-ed by Washington Post publisher Fred Ryan: "The Saudis have adopted a strategy of evasion. They still have not produced Khashoggi's body, preventing his family from holding a

proper Islamic funeral. The regime has scapegoated expendable officials, seeking to quell international furor by staging a sham trial. … The international community, to its credit, has taken a principled stand for press freedom and human rights. … And what about the United States, long the standard-bearer for liberty around the world? The dedicated professionals in our intelligence services have done their jobs. … Congress is doing its job, too. On a bipartisan basis, it voted to withhold support for Saudi Arabia's war in Yemen, investigated the U.S. response to the murder, and moved to restrict the transfer of nuclear technology to the Saudi government. …

"**White House officials have issued critical words and slaps on the wrist, but they've stopped short of imposing meaningful penalties.** They have stonewalled and obfuscated, brushing aside the CIA's findings to continue business as usual with the crown prince. This 'I see nothing!' approach has meant looking away not only as the Saudis killed a prominent journalist, but also as the regime jails women for demanding basic liberties, tortures business leaders and terrorizes citizens into submission. **Sadly, the most submissive figure in this story is President Trump.**

"Even after irrefutable evidence came to light showing the Saudis had lied about Khashoggi's death, Trump proclaimed Mohammed bin Salman a 'great ally' and

protested that the crown prince might well be innocent. **Perhaps most egregiously, Trump has abdicated the responsibilities of his office, refusing to comply with the Magnitsky Act's requirements that the administration present its findings on the Khashoggi case to Congress.** In this impotent response, Trump isn't just violating the law. He is also undermining the credibility and moral authority of the United States." (Read a translation of Fred's piece in Arabic here.)

-- The Post has produced a 25-minute documentary on Khashoggi's assassination. (Watch it here.)

-- Khashoggi's children have, in the aftermath of their father's killing, received million-dollar houses in Saudi Arabia and monthly five-figure payments as compensation for his death. Greg Miller reports: "**Khashoggi's two sons and two daughters may also receive much larger payouts — possibly tens of millions of dollars apiece — as part of 'blood money' negotiations** that are expected to ensue when the trials of Khashoggi's accused killers are completed in the coming months … The previously undisclosed payments are part of an effort by Saudi Arabia to reach a long-term arrangement with Khashoggi family members, aimed in part at ensuring that they continue to show restraint in their public statements about the killing of their father … The Khashoggi siblings have refrained from any harsh criticism of the kingdom. … The negotiations with the

family have been led by the outgoing Saudi ambassador to the United States, Khalid bin Salman, brother of the crown prince."

-- The Saudis have commenced a trial against Jamal's alleged killers — but it's clouded in secrecy. Kareem Fahim reports: The court sessions are "closed to the public and journalists. Every detail of the trial proceedings — their frequency, the names of the 11 defendants and the exact charges they face — is a matter of speculation. U.S. and Western intelligence officials have stood by their assessment that [Mohammed] ordered the operation that ended in Khashoggi's death. … In several of the court sessions, defendants had pleaded 'not guilty,' a U.S. official said. **The defendants are said to include two of the most prominent members of the 'kill squad'** allegedly sent to confront Khashoggi in the Istanbul consulate: Maher Mutreb, the leader of the squad, and Salah al-Tubaigy, an autopsy specialist who is believed to have dismembered Khashoggi's body. At least one high-ranking Saudi official, Ahmed al-Assiri, is also a defendant, according to Reuters. **But Saud al-Qahtani, a close aide to the crown prince, is not on trial. … His absence has led to accusations that Saudi Arabia is throwing mostly lower-level soldiers to the wolves rather than aggressively pursuing justice in the case."**

WEST WING INTRIGUE:

-- Presidential son-in-law Jared Kushner brushed off concerns about how he got his security clearance during an appearance on Fox News last night. “The left is going crazy about this security clearance issue,” Laura Ingraham told him during a friendly interview. “I can’t comment for the White House’s process,” Kushner replied, “but what I can say is that over the last two years that I’ve been here, I’ve been accused of all different types of things. All of those things have turned out to be false.”

The appearance followed revelations that **a White House whistleblower told lawmakers that dozens of denials for security clearances have been overturned during the Trump administration**, despite concerns about things like blackmail, foreign influence and other red flags. **Among those reversals was Kushner**, who Trump demanded be granted a permanent top-secret clearance, despite the concerns of intelligence officials.

Tricia Newbold, a White House security adviser who has served under Republican and Democratic presidents over the past 18 years, told the House Oversight Committee that **25 individuals were given clearances or access to national security information since 2018 despite concerns about ties to foreign influence, conflicts of interests, questionable or criminal**

conduct, financial problems or drug abuse. That group includes "two current senior White House officials," according to documents released by the committee. "The panel did not identify the senior White House officials but asked the White House to immediately provide documents related to the security clearances of nine officials, including Kushner, the president's daughter Ivanka Trump and national security adviser John Bolton," Rachael Bade and Tom Hamburger report.

"**Rep. Elijah E. Cummings (D-Md.), the committee chairman, said in a letter to the White House Counsel's Office that his panel would vote on Tuesday to subpoena Carl Kline**, who served as personnel security director at the White House during the first two years of the administration ... Newbold alleged that Kline, then her direct manager, overruled her clearance denials and then retaliated against her when she objected. … NBC News previously reported that Kline overruled a decision by two career White House security specialists to deny Kushner a clearance. … **The committee in its Monday memo revealed that it has spoken with other whistleblowers about the security clearance process. For now, however, the individuals were too afraid about the 'risk to their careers to come forward publicly,'** the panel wrote."

-- Republicans on the committee tried to downplay

the seriousness of Newbold's testimony by telling reporters that she said only four or five of the 25 clearance decisions were originally denied for "VERY serious reasons."

-- "**Trump, eager to tout bipartisan accomplishments in a sharply polarized Washington, feted his months-old criminal justice law with an elaborate celebration Monday** — while the White House and Congress come under renewed pressure from advocates to adequately fund the programs it created," Seung Min Kim reports. "The passage of the First Step Act in December marked one of Trump's most significant bipartisan achievements in his first two years. **Yet criminal justice advocates were alarmed last month when the administration's budget proposal requested only $14 million to implement the new law in the upcoming fiscal year — a number that fell far short of the $75 million per year outlined by the First Step Act. In the past few days, the administration has quietly revised that figure upward to about $147 million,** which would include funding to implement not only the new law but also related prisoner-rehabilitation expenses."

-- NASA is struggling to meet White House demands to send astronauts back to the moon by 2024. Administrator Jim Bridenstine said his agency will need additional funding to meet Trump's goal. (Christian Davenport)

Joe Biden speaks at the Biden Courage Awards on March 26 in New York. (Frank Franklin II/AP)

ALL EYES ON BIDEN:

-- A second woman came forward with an allegation that Joe Biden touched her inappropriately.
The former congressional aide to Rep. Jim Himes (D-Conn.) says Biden touched her inappropriately at a 2009 fundraiser. Felicia Sonmez and Elise Viebeck

report: Amy Lappos "said she was speaking out about her own experience because she was disappointed in the 'ridiculously dismissive' way Democrats — including Biden — had responded to [Lucy] Flores's account. … Lappos, 43, went on the record about the alleged incident in an interview Monday with the Hartford Courant. She said Biden, then 66, moved toward her while she was in the kitchen with several other volunteers at the private residence where the fundraiser was being held. 'It wasn't sexual, but he did grab me by the head,' she told the newspaper. **'He put his hand around my neck and pulled me in to rub noses with me.** When he was pulling me in, I thought he was going to kiss me on the mouth.' …

"**Lappos said she believes referring to Biden's behavior as 'simply affection' or 'grandpa-like' or 'friendly' is 'part of the problem.'** … She called on Biden and the other Democratic men running for the White House to 'step aside and support one of the many talented and qualified women running.' Lappos told the Courant she did not report the alleged 2009 incident at the time because 'he was the vice president. I was a nobody.' Biden and his team didn't respond to this allegation specifically."

-- Sen. Chris Coons (D-Del.) said he's confident Biden will still run for president. Coons's daughter, Maggie, was 13 when she was pictured in 2015 looking

uncomfortable as Biden leaned in to whisper something before kissing the side of her head. Coons has said that there was nothing inappropriate in the encounter and that his daughter “did not think of it as anything.” "A series of interviews Monday made clear that the caucus was still grappling with how to respond to the blowback facing a beloved member of the party,” Politico’s Burgess Everett and Marianne Levine report.

-- Nancy Pelosi said she doesn’t think the allegations against Biden are disqualifying. (The Hill)

Sen. Kamala Harris (D-Calif.) speaks at the Black Enterprise Women of Power Summit in Las Vegas. (John Locher/AP)

MORE ON 2020:

-- Kamala Harris raised $12 million in the first quarter, half of which came from digital donations. Harris's numbers are an early benchmark in a crowded field before the April 15 deadline for official records. (Chelsea Janes)

-- Amy Klobuchar released 12 years of tax returns, explaining that “transparency and accountability are fundamental to good governance.” The returns date back to 2006, the first year she was a candidate for a federal office. They show that, in 2017, she and her husband paid $62,787 in federal taxes on an adjusted gross income of $292,306. (AP)

-- Beto O’Rourke likened the electoral college to the three-fifths compromise as he called for its abolition. The former Texas congressman said eliminating the way we’ve picked presidents since 1789 is necessary to preserve a democracy that’s become “corrupted.” “This is one of those bad compromises we made at Day One in this country,” O’Rourke said. “If we got rid of the electoral college, we get a little bit closer to one person, one vote in the United States of America.”

He also pledged to sign an executive order on his first day as president that would require every member of his Cabinet to hold monthly town hall meetings that are open to the public to answer questions and listen to people’s ideas.

-- Julián Castro released a plan this morning to overhaul the nation’s immigration policy. Michael Scherer reports on the first detailed immigration policy blueprint from any of the Democratic candidates: “The former head of the U.S. Department of Housing and

Urban Development and mayor of San Antonio would end border wall construction, allow deported veterans who honorably served to return to the United States, increase refugee quotas and make it easier for family members to be reunited with relatives who are U.S. residents. He would ask Congress to provide a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants living in the United States, including young people who received protections under the Obama administration and those covered by the temporary protected-status program."

-- A book club in Iowa is going on an epic quest — reading every presidential candidate's book. The Des Moines Register's Tony Leys reports: "The club, organized by an Iowa Democratic Party leader, is setting out on a literary marathon. Its members plan to read books by each of the Democratic presidential candidates before next February's Iowa caucuses. It would be a big commitment even in a normal election cycle, when a handful of contenders toss their books in the ring. This is not a normal election cycle. The club's 583 members have 14 books on their reading list so far. The total assignment tops 3,000 pages, and more tomes are expected as new candidates join the race. The club's plan is to read one book every three weeks."

Ramon Alicea Burgos walks past his palm tree, with its top broken off more than one year ago by Hurricane Maria, outside his partially rebuilt home in the mountain town of Barranquitas, Puerto Rico. (Ramon Espinosa/AP)

THE NEW CONGRESS:

-- A massive emergency aid bill for victims of hurricanes, wildfires, flooding and other natural disasters was defeated in the Senate amid a fight between Democrats and the White House over Puerto Rico. Erica Werner and Jeff Stein report: “Senate

Democrats opposed the $13.45 billion legislation, contending the $600 million included for Puerto Rico's food stamp program is inadequate to meet the U.S. territory's needs as it attempts to recover from Hurricane Maria. The Democrats are embracing a House-passed relief bill containing hundreds of millions of dollars more for Puerto Rico than the GOP version, but it, too, failed to advance Monday as Republicans opposed it. Trump opposes sending any additional aid to Puerto Rico apart from the food stamp money, funding Republicans convinced him to accept as the price for passing the long-pending disaster bill. … Ahead of the vote, Republicans accused Democrats of holding up much-needed aid for victims of flooding in the Midwest, tornadoes in the South and volcanic eruptions in Hawaii, so they could use Puerto Rico as a political issue against the president."

-- An artist said he will sue Rep. Steve King (R-Iowa) for using one of his images in a meme promoting a "civil war" between blue and red states — unless the congressman apologizes. Reis Thebault reports: "'The point is to hold people accountable for the things they post — especially when you're a public figure,' said Paul Bain, an attorney for the illustrator Yarek Waszul, who originally crafted the image for a 2013 New York Times book review. … Waszul said he was shocked to see his work show up in King's musings about violent armed conflict between Republican-leaning states and their

Democratic-leaning neighbors. ‘Seeing one’s work reproduced without consent is a fear of any illustrator, but seeing it attached to such a callous message is a real nightmare,’ Waszul told The Washington Post.”

-- Liberals love to hate Trump loyalist Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-Fla.), and that’s all part of his plan, writes the New York Times’s Glenn Thrush: “‘In a world where the body politic has the attention span at times of a goldfish, yep, you’ve got to have the ability to reinvent yourself in this game many times,’ said Mr. Gaetz … Many Republicans in Congress stick close to Mr. Trump’s feed-the-base strategy, but few are more naturally inclined to adopt the president’s brass-knuckles brand of politics than Mr. Gaetz, 36, the ambitious son of a former Florida State Senate president, Don Gaetz.”

Gaetz is eyeing Marco Rubio's Senate seat and hopes his friendship with Gov. Ron DeSantis (R) will help him get it: “If Kansas Republicans sell Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on a run for [the] Senate next year and if Mr. Trump then nominates [Rubio] to replace Mr. Pompeo, maybe Mr. DeSantis would pick him to fill out Mr. Rubio’s term. When asked about that possibility, Mr. Gaetz grinned and said, 'Marco would be a historic pick' for the cabinet job.”

-- Republican lawmakers are privately rooting against Trump in his court battle to end Obamacare. Some

Republicans reportedly worry that if Trump wins, they won’t be able to pass any measure to replace the Affordable Care Act, costing them multiple reelection races. Others, like Sen. Mitt Romney (R-Utah), are in early discussions about a replacement plan. (The Hill)

People board a bus in a caravan of migrants departing El Salvador en route to the United States, in San Salvador. (Jose Cabezas/Reuters)

THE IMMIGRATION WARS:

-- U.S. officials were, up until last week, saying that U.S. aid efforts in El Salvador had been successful in curbing migration. Now, Trump wants to take that aid away. Kevin Sieff reports: The removal of aid "baffled development officials and Salvadorans, who saw the country's cooperation with the United States on security, civil society and economic development as a success story, inasmuch as it achieved the Trump administration's goal of slowing the flow of migrants heading north to the United States. **In the past three years, both El Salvador's homicide rate and migration flows have declined sharply.** More than 72,000 Salvadorans were apprehended crossing the U.S. border in 2016. By 2018, the number had plummeted by more than half, to fewer than 32,000 ... **'What [El Salvador is] doing is working, both on the security front and on the economic opportunity front,' U.S. Customs and Border Protection Commissioner Kevin McAleenan said in July."**

-- The administration is scrambling to respond to the migrant surge, but there are still no signs of Trump's threatened border closing. David Nakamura, Maria Sacchetti and Nick Miroff report: Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen "issued written orders to U.S. Customs and Border Protection to deploy 'emergency surge operations' to the southern border and dramatically expand a program that requires migrants to wait in Mexico as they apply for asylum in the United States.

Nielsen directed CBP to quickly reassign up to 750 blue-uniformed Office of Field Operations officers to assist Border Patrol agents with the soaring numbers of Central American migrants. **But CBP officials said Monday they had yet to receive any word about potential port closings."**

-- Trump is considering adding an "immigration czar" to coordinate immigration policy across federal agencies. The AP's Jill Colvin and Colleen Long report: "Trump is weighing at least two potential candidates for the post: former Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach and former Virginia Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli, according to the people, who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the conversations publicly. … Aides hope the potential appointment, which they caution is still in the planning stages, would serve as the 'face' of the administration on immigration issues and would placate both the president and his supporters, showing he is serious and taking action."

-- House Democrats are considering a vote on Trump's plan to close the southern border in order to force border state lawmakers to take a stand. Felicia Sonmez and Michael Scherer report: "A senior Democratic House aide said Monday that no decision has been made on whether to go forward with the vote or when to hold it. A second Democratic aide said the vote

would probably be held only if Trump moves ahead with his threat. … House Democratic appropriators are also exploring another effort to preserve foreign aid funding to Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, given their conclusion that Trump does have the power to end the funding by reprogramming it elsewhere. … Under the Democratic legislative plan, the appropriators would draft a bill that rescinds the money and then re-appropriates the same funds in a way that would prevent the president from reprogramming it to other priorities."

-- Trump is planning on visiting the border Friday as Republicans in Congress seem bewildered by the border-closing threat. Politico's Anita Kumar, Ted Hesson and Burgess Everett report: "'I understand the president's frustration but the unintended consequences of that would be bad for everybody: economic, diplomatic,' said Sen. John Cornyn of Texas ... 'I take him very seriously. But I think we should have a longer conversation about unintended consequences.'"

-- When Trump threatened to shut down the southern border, he said it was because Mexico "refuses to help with illegal immigration." The truth is more complicated than that. Mary Beth Sheridan reports: "Mexico actually works closely with the U.S. government on irregular migration. Mexico deports thousands of immigrants each month, most from Central America. That's continued under a new leftist president who has

promised more humane policies on migration. … The problem is, there appear to be far more migrants crossing the country. That's evident at the U.S. border, where detentions are soaring."

-- Ruben Garcia, an El Paso resident, has sheltered migrants for more than four decades, and now that there's a crush at the border, he is looking for a warehouse to host them. Nick Miroff reports: "In coming days, U.S. Customs and Border Protection plans to release thousands more Central Americans it has no room for — and Garcia will try to help as many of them as he can. Garcia has seen the largest migration wave in more than a decade building for months, the daily total of parents and children that the U.S. government sends his way rising from a few dozen a year ago to several hundred. On Wednesday, he took in 825 migrants, his busiest day ever."

-- The Department of Homeland Security disbanded a group of intelligence analysts last year who focused on domestic terrorism. The Daily Beast's Betsy Woodruff reports: "The group in question was a branch of analysts in DHS's Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A). They focused on the threat from homegrown violent extremists and domestic terrorists. The analysts there shared information with state and local law enforcement to help them protect their communities from these threats."

Anti-Brexit demonstrators near College Green at the House of Parliament in London on Monday. (Jonathan Brady/PA/AP)

MORE ON THE NEW WORLD ORDER:

-- The British Parliament rejected two proposals for a soft Brexit. It also declined to back a second referendum or cancel Brexit. William Booth and Karla Adam report: “The process of staging 'indicative votes' was supposed to give the House of Commons

control. Instead, Parliament tried to seize the steering wheel from Prime Minister Theresa May — and drove the car into the ditch. House Speaker John Bercow was asked by the chamber what would happen next. 'I can't say with any confidence what will happen, and, in that respect, I think I'm frankly not in a minority,' said the loquacious keeper of order. The focus now turns back again to May and whether she will put her own thrice-rejected Brexit deal to a fourth vote."

--Many British businesses are operating under the mind-set that Brexit has already happened. The New York Times's Peter S. Goodman reports: "Nearly three years of uncertainty since the June 2016 referendum has forced companies to plan for the worst ... Global banks and other financial services companies are steadily shifting thousands of jobs and more than $1 trillion in assets to European cities to ensure that they are able to serve customers across the English Channel regardless of the rules that national regulators impose after Brexit."

-- U.S. national security officials are planning for a future in which the Chinese tech giant Huawei will control a major share of the 5G global network market. The firm, which has close ties to the Chinese government, is gaining ground worldwide as many countries already use its low-cost equipment and will probably continue to do so when transitioning to the next generation of telecommunications. (Ellen Nakashima and

Souad Mekhennet)

-- The U.S. has suspended the delivery of F-35 jet equipment to Turkey because of the country's decision to purchase the Russian-made S-400 missile system. CNN's Ryan Browne reports: "'Pending an unequivocal Turkish decision to forgo delivery of the S-400, deliveries and activities associated with the stand-up of Turkey's F-35 operational capability have been suspended while our dialogue on this important matter continues with Turkey,' Lt. Col. Mike Andrews told CNN in a statement."

-- American hackers helped the United Arab Emirates spy on Al Jazeera Chairman Hamad bin Thamer Al Thani and BBC host Giselle Khoury. Reuters's Joel Schectman and Christopher Bing report: "The American operatives worked for Project Raven, a secret Emirati intelligence program that spied on dissidents, militants and political opponents of the UAE monarchy. A Reuters investigation in January revealed Project Raven's existence and inner workings, including the fact that it surveilled a British activist and several unnamed U.S. journalists. … Raven targeted Arab media figures who spanned a range of political thought — from a Beirut-based BBC host to the chairman of Al Jazeera and a producer from a London satellite channel founded by a member of the Muslim Brotherhood.

“The goal, the former Raven operatives said, was to find material showing that Qatar’s royal family had influenced the coverage of Al Jazeera and other media outlets, and uncover any ties between the influential TV network and the Muslim Brotherhood. Reuters couldn’t determine what data Raven obtained.”

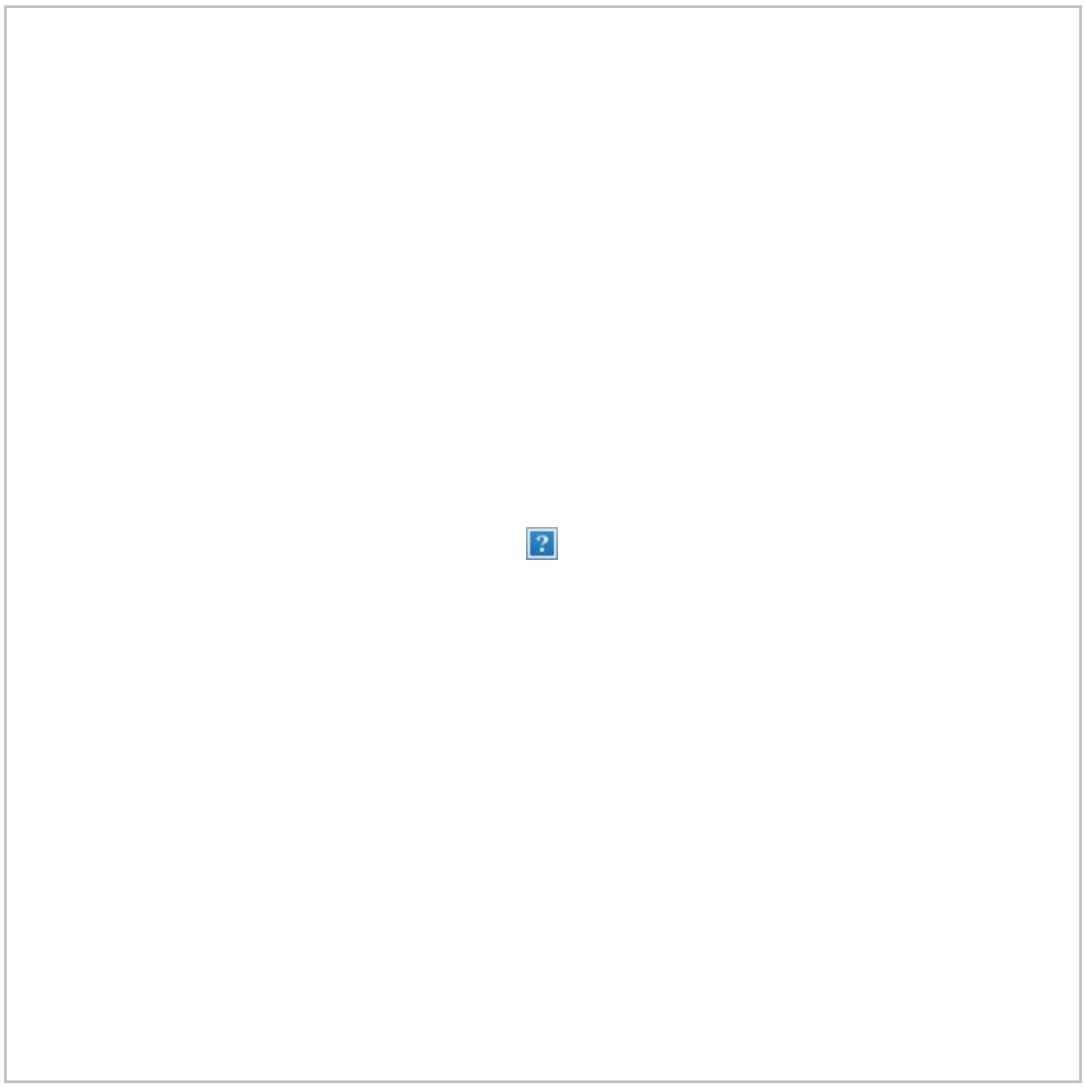
SOCIAL MEDIA SPEED READ:

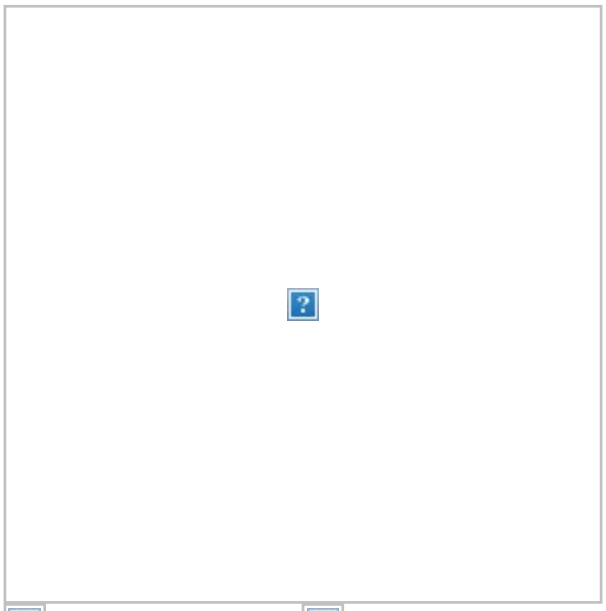
Trump reacted to the stalemate over the disaster funding bill, sending a flurry of tweets last night over a one-hour span:

Trump ended the day tweeting about Obamacare:

Former FBI director James Comey came up with a little prank:

Pete Buttigieg officiated a wedding for a young couple minutes before the bride’s scheduled C-section and shared the story on Facebook:





This Post reporter is already thinking of some security precautions for the 2020 debates:

Julián Castro wants a certain network to remember that he, too, is running for president:

Rep. Ben Ray Luján (D-N.M.) announced he is running for Senate in 2020:

Former CIA officer John Sipher reacted to the latest security clearance news from the White House:

A former governor of Michigan jumped into the debate over the allegations against Joe Biden:

The Salvadoran president-elect met with the Mexican president and joked about that Fox News chyron error:

Because it was April Fools' Day, the Los Angeles Times decided it was time to get back at the New York Times for its portrayals of the City of Angels:

GOOD READS FROM ELSEWHERE:

-- The New Yorker, "Turning bystanders into first responders," by Paige Williams: "As public shootings became commonplace, doctors started paying more attention to them. One such doctor was Lenworth Jacobs, the head trauma surgeon at Hartford Hospital, in Connecticut. He'd grown up in Jamaica, where his father was a doctor; when Jacobs was about seven, he and his dad came across an injured bicyclist by the side of the

road, and the sight of his father urgently helping a stranger left a lasting impression. Jacobs told me that trauma surgery appealed to him because each case contains a 'beginning, middle, and end.' A patient presents with a problem—'a gunshot wound, a stabbing'—which is then resolved, one way or another. When Jacobs wasn't operating, he devised protocols that would help increase survival rates in the Emergency Department. At Hartford, he founded Life Star, the first helicopter-ambulance service in Connecticut. ... Jacobs was a regent of the American College of Surgeons, an organization with some eighty thousand members worldwide. At an A.C.S. meeting soon after Sandy Hook, he urged his colleagues to focus on mitigating losses in Intentional Mass Casualty Events. 'Obviously, prevention is the way to go,' he said. 'But, once something has happened, how can we increase survival?'"

-- ProPublica, "Where in the U.S. are you most likely to be audited by the IRS?" by Paul Kiel and Hannah Fresques: "Kim M. Bloomquist, the author of the study, which was first published in the industry journal Tax Notes, served as a senior economist with the IRS' research division for two decades. He decided to map the distribution of audits to illustrate the dramatic regional effects of the IRS' emphasis on EITC audits. Because more than a third of all audits are of EITC recipients, the number of audits in each county is largely a reflection of how many taxpayers there claimed the credit, he found.

In counties with the highest audit rates, there were about 11 audits per 1,000 tax returns filed each year, he found, which is more than 40 percent above the national average."

HOT ON THE LEFT

Fox News host Tucker Carlson said MSNBC host Chris Hayes is what all men would be like if feminists had absolute power before going after Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.). From the Daily Beast's Justin Baragona: "'Chris Hayes is what every man would be if feminists ever achieved absolute power in this country: apologetic, bespectacled, and deeply, deeply

HOT ON THE RIGHT

Rep. Maxine Waters (D-Calif.) said it was a "correct thing" for the charges against actor Jussie Smollett to be dropped. Fox News's Travis Fedschun reports: "'First of all, we probably will never know all of the details,' Waters told 'Extra.' 'We've heard a lot of information. No one was hurt — that is, physically, killed, shot — he never committed a crime before, he forfeited the bail and

concerned about global warming and the patriarchal systems that cause it,' Carlson said of the All In host. … Carlson then pivoted to one of his favorite targets of late—AOC. Pointing out that she rejected the idea that she's part of a 'Tea Party of the left' by saying the Tea Party's grounded in 'xenophobia' and 'white supremacy,' Carlson mockingly shouted: 'Stop with the name-calling, you racist white supremacist xenophobe!' He added: 'So it's official. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez is a moron and nasty and more self-righteous than any televangelist who ever

it's this kind of situation where they close the case all over the country every day. I have learned this isn't unusual.' … Waters told 'Extra' she had not spoken to Smollett since the charges were dropped, but hinted the two may be in for a reunion soon. 'I would love to see him, and I am looking forward to seeing him very soon,' she said."

preached a sermon on cable access. She's not impressive, she's awful.'"

DAYBOOK:

-- Trump will meet with the secretary general of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and will later participate in the National Republican Congressional Committee's Annual Spring Dinner at the National Building Museum.

-- Pence will meet with the families of six Citgo executives detained by the Maduro regime in Venezuela before joining Trump for the NATO meeting.

QUOTE OF THE DAY:

"The focus isn't on what his intentions were, it is how his behavior is experienced and one should not invade personal space. He needs to be a lot more aware of that ... I would say with Trump it's many, many degrees of worseness if there is such a word." — Sen. Mazie Hirono (D-Hawaii) about allegations that Biden touched some women inappropriately. (Politico)

NEWS YOU CAN USE IF YOU LIVE IN D.C.:

-- Might be a good call to bring your raincoat. Rain is likely this evening. The Capital Weather Gang forecasts: “We’re not done with the jackets just yet, as this cool air mass joins forces with a coastal storm to keep us on the cool side again today, with a chance of light rain this afternoon into the evening. A pattern change then arrives tomorrow with sunny and warmer weather frustrated only by an occasionally gusty breeze. Thursday should be our warmest weekday before a cooler Friday with more showers possible, and then the potential for a nice and warm weekend.”

-- This means it will probably be a rainy game today at Nationals Park as the team welcomes the Phillies. (Matt Rogers)

-- The Capitals lost to the Panthers 5-3. (Isabelle Khurshudyan)

-- Baltimore Mayor Catherine E. Pugh is taking an indefinite leave of absence amid growing condemnation of profits she made from a children’s book sold to businesses connected to the city’s government. Rachel Chason, Erin Cox and Ovetta Wiggins report: “Pugh spokesman James E. Bentley II

said in a statement that Pugh (D) has been battling pneumonia and has been advised by her physicians that she 'needs to take time to recover and focus on her health.' He made no mention of the controversies swirling around Pugh, who planned to step down Monday night at midnight. The mayor's leave comes as Baltimore has been convulsing under a surge of violence that officials, including Pugh, have struggled to address. Homicides have topped 300 for four straight years, even as homicide arrest rates have plummeted, and there have been five police commissioners in as many years. The Baltimore Sun reported Monday that Kaiser Permanente paid Pugh more than $100,000 for copies of her self-published 'Healthy Holly' children's book at the same time it was seeking a $48 million contract from a city board controlled by the mayor."

-- The D.C. Attorney General's Office sued a man who recruited foreign teachers to work in local schools, accusing him of threatening them with deportation if they didn't sign contracts. Justin Wm. Moyer reports: "Since at least 2015, the D.C.-based Bilingual Teacher Exchange and other companies run by Earl Francisco Lopez have recruited teachers from foreign countries who wanted to work in a three-year State Department exchange program, according to a lawsuit filed in D.C. Superior Court. At least 45 teachers recruited by the company, many of them Spanish-speaking teachers from Colombia, currently teach in public and charter schools in

the city, the attorney general's office said in a statement. The suit alleges the Bilingual Teacher Exchange falsely said it represented D.C. Public Schools and could sponsor teachers, charging thousands more for visas than legitimate sponsors do before offering teachers usurious loans to pay the fees."

-- Thirty-five Chihuahuas have descended upon D.C. looking for new homes after a breeder in Mississippi surrendered them. (Martin Weil)

VIDEOS OF THE DAY:

New Zealand's leader visited a victim of the mosque shooting:

Trevor Noah discussed the backlash against Biden's “hands-on” behavior:

Seth Meyers dived into Trump's budget cuts and Barr's summary of the Mueller report:

Stephen Colbert tackled the new scandal over the White House's security clearance process:

We collected some of the best (and worst) April Fools' Day pranks from advertisers this year:

April Fools' Day 2019: These fake ads might trick you

Abby Ohlheiser and Herman Wong went through many of these publicity stunts to tell you what's real and what's not.

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